

PSYCHO-PHYSICAL WELL BEING OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED STUDENTS THROUGH YOGIC PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Yoga is a process that changes the physiology of the body through respiratory awareness and manipulation, postures and cognitive control. The concept of Yoga originated in India between 3000 and 5000 years ago (Eliade, 1973) as both a philosophy and 'science'. The meaning of this Sanskrit word is to 'yoke or join together or unite' (Taylor, 2004). There are several branches of Yoga all of which are said to assist in the development of self-realization. These include Kama Yoga (selfless service), Bhakti Yoga (devotional love), Hatha Yoga (mental and physical purity and balance), Jnana Yoga (knowledge and wisdom), Raja Yoga (mental mastery), Mantra Yoga (voice and sound), Yantra Yoga (vision and form), Laya and Kundalini Yoga (arousal of latent psychic nerve force) and Tantra Yoga (physiological discipline) (Hewitt, 1983).

KEYWORDS: Yoga, Physiology & Selfless Service

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INTRODUCTION

A treatise on Raja Yoga was the first documentation on Yoga. This treatise, known as the Yoga Sutras was compiled by sage Patanjali. The Yoga Sutras describe in great detail the purpose of Yoga interpreted as the union between the individual self and the universal self (Iyengar, 2001). Within the Yoga Sutras are described the disciplines necessary to achieve this union. These disciplines are referred to as the eight limbs of Yoga and comprise of a complete system of physical, mental and spiritual development that incorporates yamas (abstinences), niyamas (observances), asanas (postures), pranayama (breath awareness and control), pratyahara (deep relaxation), dharana (concentration), dhyana (mental concentration) and samadhi (self realization)

Differently abled in children and adolescents have a negative impact on their families, schools, and communities. Yoga practices have a positive effect on brain wave frequencies, glucose metabolism, neurotransmitter activity and the autonomic nervous system, all of which are affected in disruptive behavior.

A disability may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, and developmental or some combination of these. A disability may be present from birth, or occur during a person's lifetime. Disability is caused by impairments to various subsystems of the body – these can be broadly sorted into the following categories.

Different Dimensions of Disabilities

Physical Disability: Any impairment which limits the physical function of limbs or fine or gross motor ability is a physical disability. Other physical disabilities include impairments which limit other facets of daily

living, such as severe sleep apnea.

Sensory Disability: Sensory system, Sensory disability is impairment of one of the senses. The term is used primarily to refer to vision and hearing impairment, but other senses can be impaired.

Visual Impairment: Visual impairment (or vision impairment) is vision loss (of a person) to such a degree as to qualify as an additional support need through a significant limitation of visual capability resulting from either disease, trauma, or congenital or degenerative conditions that cannot be corrected by conventional means, such as refractive correction, medication, or surgery.

Hearing Impairment: (Hard of hearing or deafness) refers to conditions in which individuals are fully or partially unable to detect or perceive at least some frequencies of sound which can typically be heard by most people. Mild hearing loss may sometimes not be considered a disability.

Olfactory and gustatory impairment of the sense of smell and taste are commonly associated with aging but can also occur in younger people due to a wide variety of causes.

Olfactory Disorders Are: Anosmia – inability to smell Dysosmia – things smell different than they should, Hyperosmia – an abnormally acute sense of smell., Hyposmia – decreased ability to smell Olfactory Reference Syndrome – psychological disorder which causes patients to imagine they have strong body odor, Parosmia – things smell worse than they should., Phantosmia – "hallucinated smell", often unpleasant in nature, Complete loss of the sense of taste is known as ageusia, while dysgeusia is persistent abnormal sense of taste.

Somato Sensory Impairment: Insensitivity to stimuli such as touch, heat, cold, and pain are often an adjunct to a more general physical impairment involving neural pathways and is very commonly associated with paralysis (in which the motor neural circuits are also affected).

Balance Disorder: A balance disorder is a disturbance that causes an individual to feel unsteady, for example when standing or walking. It may be accompanied by symptoms of being giddy, woozy, or have a sensation of movement, spinning, or floating. Balance is the result of several body systems working together. The eyes (visual system), ears (vestibular system) and the body's sense of where it is in space (proprioception) need to be intact. The brain, which compiles this information, needs to be functioning effectively.

Intellectual Disability: It is a broad concept that ranges from mental retardation to cognitive deficits too mild or too specific (as in specific learning disability) to qualify as mental retardation. Intellectual disabilities may appear at any age. Mental retardation is a sub type of intellectual disability.

Mental Health and Emotional Disabilities: A mental disorder or mental illness is a psychological or behavioural pattern generally associated with subjective distress or disability that occurs in an individual, and perceived by the majority of society as being outside of normal development or cultural expectations.

Developmental Disability: Any disability that results in problems with growth and development. Although the term is often used as a synonym or euphemism for intellectual disability, the term also encompasses many congenital medical conditions that have no mental or intellectual components, for example spina bifida.

Nonvisible Disabilities: Several chronic disorders, such as diabetes, asthma, inflammatory bowel disease or epilepsy, would be counted as nonvisible disabilities, as opposed to disabilities which are clearly visible, such as those requiring the use of a wheelchair.

Systematic Yoga practice will increase the physiological, physical and psychological wellbeing. Disability affects their mental attitude. They lack confidence and have a poor self-image. They are frustrated due to the inability to do simple things, either not at all or with immense difficulty;-

Postures to increase concentration: Balancing postures such as Vrikshasana,

Ardhachakrasana and Natarajasana. Children have to be helped by the parent or the instructor to maintain these postures.

Postures to improve confidence and the body stance: Back bending postures such as Bhujangasana, Ushtrasana, Chakrasana, Dhanurasana that opens the shoulders and the chest region are useful for improving their self confidence and also their body stance.

Asana work on the muscles and the joints, creating space within the body's structure to help increase circulation and improve flexibility. The physical functioning becomes more integrated and less stressful. Postures to improve blood flow to the head.

Pranayama controls and regulates breathing and is very beneficial for the disabled. Mukha Bhastrika is also known as the 'cleansing breath' helps remove old, stagnant air from the lungs and cleanses the bloodstream of excess carbon dioxide.

Trataka, Kapalabhati, may be very useful for the developing concentration and also act as tranquillizers, : The practice of meditation in any form reduces the feeling.

Physiological Benefits of Yogic Exercise

Pulse rate decreases, Respiratory rate decreases, Blood pressure decreases (of special significance for hypo reactors), Galvanic Skin Response (GSR) increases, EEG - alpha waves increase (theta, delta, and beta waves also increase during various stages of meditation), EMG activity decreases, Cardiovascular efficiency increases, Respiratory efficiency increases (respiratory amplitude and smoothness increase, tidal volume increases, vital capacity increases, breath-holding time increases), Gastrointestinal function normalizes, Endocrine function normalizes, Excretory functions improve, Musculoskeletal flexibility and joint range of motion increase, Posture improves, Strength and resiliency increase, Endurance increases, Energy level increases, Weight normalizes, Sleep improves, Immunity increases, and Pain decreases.

CONCLUSIONS

Yoga is a universally recognized practice to achieve unison of physique and mind and the research study would endeavour to extend yoga to the differently abled students in order to motivate them physically and physiologically to achieve their potential. To bring handicapped community of differently abled students to the mainstream by subjecting them to yogic practices (otherwise considered as a privileged activity for normal humans only) and to scientifically evidence the same. This is intended to bring the under- privileged classes of differently abled students with and without physical deformities to the mainstream of physical and mental wellbeing.

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